

they are indicative of the sort of discussion that is available on this subject.

Paul LaGarde, eminent Hebraist of the past generation, offered an interesting theory regarding the "mastercodex." He held that all Hebrew Bibles were copies of a mastercodex made about 130 AD and used the uniformity of the mediaeval tradition to prove this. Most scholars feel the uniformity pattern emerged much later than this and there seems to be no external evidence of the mastercodex.

Some have suggested that the work of Akiba, about 135 AD, was foundational to the uniform text. He was a learned rabbi who concentrated on the meaning and significance of the most minute parts of the Hebrew text. He was an overly-legalistic exegete of small forms and was concerned for guarding the text against any overtures of Christians. Just how far he did this for the Hebrew text is conjectural.

A tradition exists regarding a text kept in Jerusalem: the temple scroll. It is suggested it was ferreted out of the temple before the destruction of Titus and so became the mother of all Hebrew texts. It is a fascinating tradition and supported by some through the knowledge of the Severus text...one kept in Rome. But even this is doubtful and there seems to be no real evidence for the suggestion.

In short, there is not a great deal known about the foundation period of the Masoretic text or about the history of the text that is represented in the preserving work.

3. The Preservation of the Text

There are several stages and devices in the matter of text preservation that are of interest to us. I have tried to break them down into logical categories and not sought to bother you with too many details. In the advent that you should get a list of minutiae, remember that such are not for memorization but only so that you have seen them....someplace!

a. Pre-Masoretic devices in text preservation

(1) Text-devices